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Soviet Union, Eastern Europe

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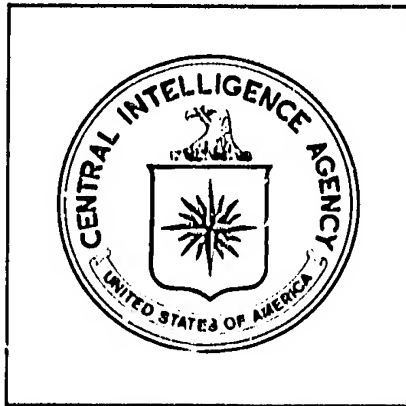
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This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Shelopin Removed from
Soviet Politburo

The Soviet party Central Committee meeting in Moscow yesterday signaled the beginning of preparations for the next party congress and eliminated one of the potential runners in the long-term race to succeed General Secretary Brezhnev. The removal of trade unions chief Aleksandr Shelopin from the Politburo does little to clarify the succession picture, however, and there could well be additional moves within the leadership between now and the convening of the congress.

Brezhnev was clearly in charge at the plenum, delivering a report on plans for the congress, now set for February 24, 1976. Foreign Minister Gromyko delivered a report on foreign affairs, which is usually given by Brezhnev. This continues the trend toward greater collectivity in the leadership that has been apparent since the General Secretary's illness this winter. Since his return to public view, Brezhnev has been pacing himself more carefully. As a result, greater public exposure has been given to his colleagues.

The decision setting the date for the party congress has come earlier and more smoothly than it did for the 24th congress in 1971. This suggests satisfaction on the part of the leaders with present political conditions and confidence in their ability to set the course of the Soviet Union over the next five years.

The announcement of the opening date for the congress should trigger a cycle of party meetings which will begin in the fall and continue up through the hierarchy, ending by late January or early February. Personnel shifts will probably be

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occurring from now on at all levels within the party, and final results of these shifts will determine the relative political strength of the various Soviet leaders for the next several years.

Shelopin has long been regarded warily by some of his colleagues as a dangerous combination of ability and ambition, and his departure from the Kremlin removes a potential element of instability in the leadership. In 1965, he mounted a serious but unsuccessful challenge to Brezhnev's leadership. When that failed, his career took a precipitous slide. In 1967 he was removed from the party Secretariat and given the trade unions post--a traditionally powerless figurehead position.

Shelopin's visit to England and Scotland last month was greeted by a tremendous outcry in the British press against him personally as a former chief of the Soviet secret police (KGB), and clearly hurt his prospects for the future. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Soviet Central Committee Meets

The resolution issued by yesterday's Central Committee plenum expressed satisfaction with the fruits of the four-year-old Soviet "peace program" and endorsed continuation of a detente policy. Striking a typical balance, the resolution also observed, however, that the successes of Soviet foreign policy were based on Soviet economic and military strength, and noted that the forces of war and reaction were still active.

The resolution put the party's stamp of approval on further progress in the force reduction talks and SALT by holding that political detente must be accompanied by military detente, including arms reductions. It also noted the continuing importance of bilateral and multilateral summitry in improving international relations.

In light of recent international developments, the Soviet leadership apparently concluded that this was an appropriate time for a foreign policy review. Like past Central Committee resolutions, however, this one is short on specifics. Details were almost certainly taken up by Foreign Minister Gromyko in his report to the plenum, but neither his speech nor that of party chief Brezhnev is likely to be made public.

The plenum's emphasis on foreign policy jibes with reports that Moscow has begun a broad assessment of Soviet relations with the West in preparation for the party congress next February.

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[REDACTED] says that this group has at least reached some preliminary conclusions:

--World developments since the last party congress in 1971 have demonstrated the correctness of Moscow's

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detente policy, and the policy should be continued.

- The capitalist powers retain great strength and resilience, and will rebound from their current economic crisis.
- The economic rewards of detente, especially the increased imports of Western technology, will not in themselves obviate the need for change in the Soviet political and economic structure if the USSR is to close the technology gap with the West.

This interpretation of Soviet thinking is obviously subject to change, and other Soviets might be prepared to argue that the foreign policy line should be adjusted to take advantage of the changing world situation. Nonetheless, it is consistent with other signs of the mood in Moscow. A recent article in *Pravda* by the minister of foreign trade, which highlighted the rapid growth of trade with the West, took a strongly self-confident stance, contrasting the strengthened political, economic, and military posture of the USSR with the troubles of the West. During Secretary Simon's visit to Moscow last week, the Soviets made it clear that while their interest in bilateral trade is still high, it is up to the US to remove political obstacles to increased trade. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Iraqi's Visit Fails to
Stem Soviet Concern

The brief, official visit to Moscow of Iraqi strong man Saddam Husayn, which ended April 15, appears to have been amicable, but probably did not lessen concern in the Kremlin about Baghdad's drift away from the USSR.

In his speech at a dinner for the Iraqis, Soviet Premier Kosygin implied that Iraq's accord with Iran will reduce Baghdad's dependence on Moscow. He did not endorse the accord and cautioned that "imperialists" still have designs on Iraq. The agreement was endorsed, however, in Moscow Radio's Arabic-language broadcast of the communique.

Kosygin's remarks suggest that Moscow is concerned that the Baathist regime opposes a role for the Iraqi Communist Party in the government. He said that Moscow regards the cohesion of leftist forces as an "earnest" of Iraq's revolutionary credentials.

The Soviet Premier also indirectly voiced misgivings about Iraqi policy toward the Kurds. The Soviets, who have been cool to Iraq's armed suppression of the rebellion, may think that the Baathists intend to eliminate the Kurds as a political factor. The Soviets may hope that the collapse of Kurdish leader Barzani's movement will lead to a revival of leftist influence among the Kurds that the Soviets could exploit.

Kosygin championed closer cooperation among Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, arguing that a united position would enable the Arabs to confront Israel more effectively. In an apparent reference to Baghdad's charges that Syria has diverted water from the

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Euphrates River, the Soviet leader urged that "all" obstacles to unity be removed.

The visit appears to have been short on substantive accomplishments, with new agreements limited to a consular convention and cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Although the Iraqi and Soviet chiefs of staff participated in the talks, there is no indication that any new military agreements were reached. They may, however, have discussed continuing differences over such issues as provision of spare parts and training. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Yugoslav-Soviet Relations
After the Bijedic Visit

Premier Bijedic's visit to the Soviet Union from April 9 to 15, during which he hit back at recent Soviet efforts to belittle the Yugoslav partisan resistance during World War II, was a qualified success.

Bijedic carried Belgrade's resentment into the halls of the Kremlin itself where, in toasting his hosts, he pointedly referred to the unique role of the partisans in liberating Yugoslavia. As a result, the final communique pays special tribute to the Yugoslav peoples for their struggle against fascism. It also notes that both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union made huge sacrifices during World War II. Following his talks in Moscow, Bijedic drove Belgrade's point home in Leningrad and Kiev. Furthermore, he sniped at the Soviets by pointing out that the partisans received military aid from the Western allies before Soviet assistance arrived in 1944.

Despite the communique's claim that the visit took place in a spirit of "friendship and mutual understanding," it is clear that other differences persisted. On international problems, for example, the communique said only that the two sides had a "comprehensive exchange of views"--a formulation that implies disagreement on a number of issues. The one area where the two sides expressed satisfaction with bilateral relations was in economic relations.

Moscow's handling of the 30th anniversary of victory in World War II, coming on the eve of the Bijedic visit, showed an almost complete lack of sensitivity to Yugoslav pride over the partisan war effort (*Staff Notes*, April 11 and 14). [REDACTED] 25X1C

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25X1C [REDACTED] tried to excuse the Kremlin's heavy-handedness to a Western colleague by blaming Soviet military writers. He grudgingly admitted, however, that the blunder had prejudiced chances of Yugoslav participation in VE Day celebrations planned by the socialist countries.

Although the Yugoslav press generally indicates satisfaction with the Bijedic visit, the articles stress that good bilateral relations depend on the adherence of both sides to previously agreed principles. Indeed the communiqué specifically refers to the need for "mutual respect, sovereignty, full equality and non-interference in internal affairs." Yugoslav commentator Milika Sundic stressed these principles in his evaluation of the trip, warning that failure to live up to them is unacceptable to Belgrade and "cannot be useful for the Soviet Union." (CONFIDENTIAL NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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Force Reduction Talks Recess

The fifth round of the force reduction talks in Vienna ends today. There has been no progress in resolving basic differences, and the talks remain stalemated. They will resume in mid-May.

Both East and West marked time during this round. The Soviets and their allies offered a revised scenario for negotiating their proposal of last October that called for initial reductions of 20,000 men by both sides in 1975. They also offered to amend slightly their basic proposal of November 1973. Eastern representatives commented informally that they did not expect the West to take these proposals seriously and were not surprised when the Western delegations rejected them.

Neither East nor West has shown signs during the round that they are overly disturbed by the lack of progress in Vienna. The Soviets have never appeared to be under time pressure during the talks. Various Soviet officials have implied that there would be no movement in Vienna until the European security conference in Geneva concludes in a satisfactory manner. In addition, there have been some indications that Moscow is aware that the West might substantially modify its basic proposals, and the Soviets apparently are content to await such an initiative. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY)

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Moscow Plans for China Without Mao

The Soviet Union has apparently concluded that the course of the post-Mao power struggle will be protracted. There is no entirely clear or consistent picture of the Soviet appraisal of the post-Mao years and there probably are differences among various bureaucracies about how best to deal with China, both now and in the future. Nevertheless, certain broad outlines emerge, and running through these is a theme of hopefulness that the USSR will be able to influence the outcome in ways that will ease Chinese hostility.

Moscow sees all power in China as concentrated in the hands of Mao and three factions: the leftists (usually associated with the Shanghai party organization), the moderates (those associated with Chou En-lai and the economic ministries), and the military, whose political power has been dramatically reduced but whose allegiance in the post-Mao period cannot yet be predicted. Mao is seen as in control, but not as all-powerful, acting as a sort of arbiter who imposes his policies on China by manipulating the factions that contend for his favor.

China Immediately after Mao

Soviet observers have at times claimed that the Cultural Revolution eroded power at the center and enhanced separatist tendencies in at least some regions of China. For instance, one Soviet report in the summer of 1974 stated that "localist tendencies" had increased sharply in China. By and large, however, Soviet commentary plays down the prospect that China will break up during the post-Mao years.

Instead, Soviet China-watchers anticipate a prolonged period of political instability at the center during which Mao's myrmidons will struggle

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with one another for pre-eminence. This period will last, according to various Soviet observers, from seven to ten years, and no strong figure is expected to emerge from the upper echelons of the present leadership. By the end of this period, however, some as yet unknown figure will have consolidated power into his hands.

Most Soviet observers feel that the leftists will have the initial advantage in the post-Mao period, but will not be able to consolidate this hold because they lack a strong base in the provinces and in the army, and have little practical administrative experience. Thus, neither Wang Hung-wen or Yao Wen-yuan (long abused by Soviet propaganda) is expected to be able to fill Mao's shoes. Chou En-lai is said to be regarded with suspicion by Mao and will not be able to rally sufficient forces to gain predominance. Other current leaders, such as Teng Hsiao-ping, are regarded with contempt by the Soviets and are not considered to have much staying power.

In Moscow's view, the political struggle among these contending forces will result in a stalemate. New policies are not expected to be pursued with any consistency as the present generation of Chinese leaders kills itself off, politically if not physically. During these years of maneuver, however, Moscow will have opportunities to propose the expansion of commercial, cultural, and diplomatic relations. These offers will be made primarily to show Soviet good will and to gain a sense of the direction of the political changes in China. Because of the unsettled leadership struggle in China, however, the offers will be made primarily to probe Chinese intentions and to prepare the ground for more extensive actions when, in Moscow's view, the time is ripe. There is little evidence in Soviet writings, or in their secret assessments, that a forceful, or saber rattling policy is under serious consideration.

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Sino-Soviet Relations and Factions Within China

Although Moscow sees little hope for improved relations with China in the immediate post-Mao years, over the longer run the Soviets are cautiously confident that China will break with Mao's hostility toward Moscow and that the two countries will be able to reach some sort of modus vivendi, perhaps even a relationship that can be labeled detente. It is clear from secret Soviet documents that Moscow is convinced that there are significant forces in China that want to improve Sino-Soviet relations. It is much less clear that their conviction is based on more than wishful thinking. As one China watcher told a US embassy officer, "we know there are pro-Soviet voices, but we don't know who they are." Even classified Soviet assessments are notably lacking in specifics on who exactly are the pro-Soviet Chinese.

Soviet optimism rests, in part, on the expectation that the new generation of Chinese leaders will view domestic imperatives and the outside world (including the Soviet Union) from quite different perspectives than the current leaders. Moscow detects a considerable diversity of opinion beneath the surface in China and expects that in time new forces and ideas will emerge. Questions of domestic development, international economic relations, and Chinese relations with the Soviet Union are among the topics that are considered likely to be debated vigorously in the post-Mao years and to be answered in terms different from the current orthodoxy in Peking.

This deduction flows from Moscow's strong belief that such Maoist campaigns as the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution, as well as Mao's anti-Sovietism, are inconsistent with Chinese needs. Moscow is convinced that these policies have generated opposition within the party and the military which will come to the fore after Mao's demise, providing the opportunity for

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improved Sino-Soviet relations. In its simplest terms, this Soviet attitude reflects a conviction that China needs Soviet friendship to carry out the sort of modernization the Soviet Union knows that China wants. Maoism is seen as an aberration that may persist for a time after Mao passes from the scene but will ultimately be repudiated.

Moscow Perceives Chinese Factionalism

Although Soviet commentary usually portrays the Chinese leadership as divided between radical and pragmatist, it appears that Moscow does not regard these labels as useful analytic tools. In fact, it appears that the USSR does not see a great deal of substantive difference between the two factions on issues that will matter in the future.

This is illustrated by the recent observation by a Soviet official [REDACTED] that differences in China on the question of relations with the Soviet Union have nothing to do with the radical-pragmatist split since members of both groups want to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

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Moscow almost certainly thinks that factions will decide the post-Mao power struggle, but these factions will be split on bureaucratic and functionalist rather than ideological grounds. Moscow will probably look at this power struggle in light of the one that followed the death of Lenin and will see it as a contest between groups of politicians whose thirst for power is stronger than their consistency or loyalty to labels acquired in the late Maoist years.

Following the death of Lenin, political labels and policies played only a subsidiary role in determining victor and vanquished as the Soviet leaders maneuvered and changed policies to gain supreme power. Policies were used largely as a means of gaining

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advantage in the power struggles. Power was sought by a combination of persuasion and force used to mobilize large segments of the party on the basis of appeals to bureaucratic self-interest and to conceptions of national good.

In post-Mao China, Moscow would assume that contenders for power would espouse positions not as ends in themselves but as a means to power. Chinese factions would adopt certain programs because they believed significant portions of the party would be convinced--logically, emotionally, and by the implied threat of force--that the policies were both in the national interest and in the bureaucratic self-interest of these elites. Starting with a conviction that Moscow knows what is best for China (e.g., economic development along Soviet lines and greater cohesion with the communist movement) and viewing post-Maoist power struggles in light of the Soviet past, the USSR would expect to influence internal developments in China in a significant way.

Dealing With the Factions

Moscow will probably attempt to intervene in the contentions for power at strategic moments by identifying the interests and needs of vital party and governmental organizations as well as the motivations, needs, and weaknesses of the major figures who have a substantial constituency within the party. It will seek to provide incentives and rewards to selected groups and elites in order to influence them toward improved relations.

Among those whose voices will be heard in the succession struggle will be the military, which has been a major target of Soviet propaganda and covert activity for years. Moscow appears convinced that the military, or at least important elements within the military establishment, would be willing to improve relations with the Soviet Union in order to ease the danger of a war and in return for access to advanced weapons.

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It is uncertain how much military aid the Soviet Union might be willing to provide China after the long period of open hostility between the two countries. Moscow's habitual use of military aid as an instrument of political influence, however, suggests that the Soviet leaders would grant aid if they were convinced that it would assist a pro-Soviet faction in Peking.

Moscow also is convinced that vital groups within the party are anxious to set out on a path of rapid industrial development. Moscow might have some of the same reservations about providing economic aid as about military aid, but on balance it will probably look upon the promise of economic assistance as a useful form of influence during the course of the power struggle in China. Moscow probably is now also attempting to identify those within the party who would try to consolidate power on the basis of a program of rapid development of heavy industry.

A further group that Moscow will hope to influence will be the ideologists within the Chinese party. Recognizing that many in this group will hope to perpetuate Mao's hostility toward the USSR, Moscow nevertheless will look to the so-called healthy elements within the party to seek a reconciliation with the CPSU. The Soviets may harbor the forlorn hope that by drawing these elements back into communion with the movement as a whole, their prestige and authority will be raised at home.

In attempting to identify, reward, and thereby assist policy coalitions and potentially friendly figures in post-Mao China, the Soviet Union may offer other policy concessions particularly in the border dispute. Since negotiations on this issue began in 1969, the two sides have made no apparent progress largely because of the Chinese demand that Soviet forces draw back from the territory along the border

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designated by Peking as "disputed." Moscow has already shown some willingness, however, to compromise on this issue, and in private discussions with Americans, Soviet officials have suggested that further concessions were possible. One of the reasons for delaying these concessions may be that Moscow is waiting until the post-Mao years, when it hopes to be able to identify and reward favored individuals and groups with a timely border offer.

Conceivably, Soviet intervention in Chinese affairs could become more direct, particularly if the post-Mao power struggles lead to a drastic weakening of authority at the center. In the 1930s and 1940s the Soviet Union attempted to exploit periods of Chinese weakness, particularly by expanding its influence and presence in Sinkiang. The USSR will not ignore such opportunities if they occur again, but it is doubtful that Moscow is devoting much planning to this possibility.

Prospects and Implications

We doubt that the Soviets have access to sources of information in China that will enable them to assess and manipulate events in post-Mao China with a high degree of confidence. Their record in dealing with the Chinese Communist Party since it was founded in 1921 can hardly give them high expectations of success.

25X1C If Moscow again attempts to interject itself into Chinese affairs, it will probably hinder rather than promote improved relations. Soviet officials themselves, in their less manipulative moments, probably recognize this. Speaking with American officials last autumn, [REDACTED] ob- 25X1C served that "Socialism is a strong idea, but nationalism is stronger."

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Moscow, nevertheless, probably does not feel that it will have many alternatives in dealing with post-Mao China. Neither military intervention nor total passivity will seem attractive, and efforts to manipulate the power struggle may be seen as potentially useful without incurring major risks of over-involvement.

Since it sees little or no prospect for improved relations with China as long as Mao is in power and in the immediate post-Mao period, the Soviet Union will probably use this time to try to improve its knowledge of Chinese politics and to gain access to potentially influential figures. Moscow's hopefulness over the longer term implies, moreover, that it will avoid major military moves and significant political concessions in the short run. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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